



Kathy McCarthy, a manager in INL's Nuclear Science & Technology Directorate, was recently honored as a "Woman of Today & Tomorrow for 2011" by the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage.

INL leader honored for courage, confidence and character

By [Teri Ehresman](#), *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

Girl Scouts are famous for their cookies. They also focus on developing courage, confidence and character.

Kathryn McCarthy, Ph.D., deputy associate laboratory director for Nuclear Science & Technology, was recently honored as a "Woman of Today & Tomorrow for 2011" by the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage for exhibiting those same traits. The award is designed to recognize women of extraordinary vision, achievement and leadership who serve as outstanding role models to girls by exemplifying the key qualities of Girl Scouts — courage, confidence and character.

McCarthy was recognized for her accomplishments in nuclear energy and engineering, fields that have traditionally attracted very few women. In the last 20 years at INL, she has made important technical and leadership contributions in a number of areas with special expertise in fusion energy technologies and fission fuel cycle technologies.

Today she is an internationally recognized scientist, a distinguished leader and an effective contributor to the quality of life in her community. She was nominated for the award by the Idaho section of the American Nuclear Society, which noted in the nomination letter that "her example has served to provide inspiration and positive encouragement for many young women who have considered, or chosen, a career in science and engineering."

Following completion of her doctorate in philosophy degree at UCLA, where she was chosen as Outstanding Woman Graduate Student of the Year, McCarthy worked as a visiting scientist at the Kernforschungszentrum in Karlsruhe, Germany, the Kurchatov Institute in Moscow, and at the Latvian Academy of Sciences in Riga, Latvia. She came to INL in 1991, and based on her significant scientific and leadership contributions to the success of the laboratory, has steadily risen through the technical and managerial ranks.

In addition to her INL responsibilities, she is the national technical director for systems analysis for the Fuel Cycle Research and Development programs, leading the United States multilaboratory efforts in systems analysis. She also serves as chair of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for the Nuclear Energy Agency Working Party on scientific issues of the Fuel Cycle (WPFC) and chairs the expert group on fuel cycle transition scenarios, which is one of five expert groups under the WPFC.

In 2000, she won the American Nuclear Society's Women's Achievement Award. This award recognizes outstanding personal dedication and technical achievement in the fields of nuclear science, nuclear engineering, research, and education — all fields to which she has significantly contributed.

McCarthy also received the American Nuclear Society Presidential Citation for "Service to the American Nuclear Society at all levels from the local section to the national board of directors ... for sustained professional leadership on international issues including the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership." She has won numerous additional awards, appointments and recognition.

The award noted McCarthy's interest in mentoring and her commitment to programs and helping early career students and co-workers.

One student she continues to mentor is Denia Djokic with the Nuclear Engineering Department at UC Berkeley. Djokic first met McCarthy while she was giving a talk at UC Berkeley. "I was immediately drawn to the content of the research she presented as well as her magnetic personality," Djokic said.

After that meeting, McCarthy helped her establish a working relationship with the Systems Analysis group at INL, which helped Djokic with her doctoral thesis. She says since then, McCarthy has supported her unwaveringly and has enabled her to pursue many valuable facets of her academic endeavors and enrich her research goals.



The "Women of Today & Tomorrow" award recognizes female role models of extraordinary vision, achievement and leadership.

"I am so grateful for her generous mentorship and the addictive enthusiasm and care she exhibits for my well-being and success. I wish for every student to be as fortunate to have a mentor and role model such as Kathy," says Djokic.

She has also been a mentor to longtime INL employee Cindie Jensen.



Kathy McCarthy enjoys a luncheon with other honorees.

"Kathy has been my mentor for over 12 years — pushing me to excel in areas that would not have been possible otherwise," says Jensen. "For a person without a degree, she has made it possible for me to organize technical sessions at national meetings, give presentations and further my professional development.

"I am so happy that she has received this award and I appreciate all she continues to do for me in my career. She reminds me, 'You can do it,' and with her guidance she has helped me grow professionally."

McCarthy is also well known in the national and international nuclear community.

"When I met Kathy, I was dazzled by her confidence and ease in explaining complex nuclear energy technologies to people with little or no science and technology background," says Mimi Limbach, partner with Potomac Communications Group, of Washington, D.C.

"She routinely makes nuclear science accessible to the public, and she always makes it interesting and entertaining. She routinely presents her work and that of the lab to other scientists as well as government officials throughout the world with grace and aplomb."

Kristen Ozaki, daughter of employee Cal Ozaki, was recognized as the "Woman of Tomorrow" for her achievements in the Girl Scout program and her work with Breaking Boundaries, an organization that promotes HIV/AIDS awareness.

Others honored by the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage were: Margaret Hendricks, Shonni Rule, Bev Hott, Sue Rothermel, Bev Kemp, Ann Howell and Shelly Smede.

[Feature Archive](#)